

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KINSHASA 008561

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/27/2010

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: GOMA POLITICAL NOTES

REF: A. KIGALI 4167

[B](#). KINSHASA 8211

[C](#). KIGALI 4261

[D](#). KINSHASA 4046

Classified by Economic Officer Katherine Simonds. Reason:
1.5(d).

[1](#)1. (C) Goma is not a very political town, despite its status as administrative headquarters for the RCD. While numerous general strikes (villes mortes) closed down Bukavu for days at a time over the last year, in Goma only one part of the city shut down and that for only one day. Residents of Goma, like their countrymen in Kinshasa, are focussed on survival. However unhappy they may be with the authorities, they devote their energy to getting through each day, rather than to political activity. Nevertheless, during Econoff's five-day visit to Goma, political themes arose. This cable (the last of the series of reports on the visit) covers political issues, including: impressions of the RCD; the absence of concrete signs that Rwanda ultimately intends to annex the Kivus; the attitudes of Goma residents toward Kabila and Kinshasa; and the aborted attempt by a prominent businessman to form a new political party. This cable also touches on security issues.

Impressions of the RCD

[1](#)2. (C) RCD leaders were eager to meet with Econoff. The RCD's Director of External Relations (equivalent to Minister of Foreign Affairs) immediately returned econoff's call although he was at the airport departing for a Joint Political Committee meeting. He asked her to meet with his deputy. The deputy insisted on arranging meetings with the RCD's Directors of Mines, Finance and Economy, and all three made time for the meetings, despite the fact that most of their week was taken up with a general meeting of party leaders. Even Secretary General Ruberwa tried to arrange a meeting with econoff.

[1](#)3. (C) The RCD met 6-8 hours a day for three days during econoffs visit to formulate an action plan for the party. The business community was scornful of the meetings and of the RCD in general. They note that the party has a penchant for long meetings that produce little; the RCD met for almost a full month soon after it was formed. Business contacts concede that the recent cabinet shuffle (Ref A) improved the quality of RCD department heads, but believe that any effort at good governance currently underway is too little and too late to earn the party popular support. Many of the people with whom econoff discussed the RCD's new policy for coltan exports (Ref B) are confident that the RCD will back down under pressure, as, they say, it has done several times in the past.

Congolese Institutions Remain

[1](#)4. (C) While Rwanda clearly runs the RCD and, through the RCD, the Kivus, they have not altered the basic Congolese structure of governance. There is no obvious displacement of Congolese institutions by Rwandan institutions, which might be expected if Rwanda's plans include future annexation of the Kivus, as some believe. Both the RCD's Director of Finance and the local coordinator of the electricity parastatal SNEL briefed econoff on the administrative structure of enterprises under their control. The Finance Director said that the RCD controlled parts of eight different provinces. In each province, a governor and various state services (e.g. customs and other revenue agencies) operate, in accordance with Congolese law. He said all are officially subservient to Kinshasa, but the RCD has appointed a coordinator for each agency to control things until Kinshasa can take over once again. The SNEL coordinator described his role in similar terms.

Nostalgia for Kabila

15. (C) People from all levels of society in Goma were interested to hear how things are going in Kinshasa. Both affluent and average Gomaans asked about the dollar-franc exchange rate in Kinshasa (which is about twice as high as in Goma). Several people told econoff they had heard there was "famine" in Kinshasa. Although Goma suffered some severe looting when the AFDL arrived, casual conversation suggests that Kabila is popular in Goma. He gets credit for helping to get rid of the refugees who destroyed the local economy. A couple of contacts told econoff that there was a brief respite from the fear of victimization under Kabila. One commented that for about a year, soldiers got paid, and didn't need to rob the populace in order to survive. Another commented that the AFDL had executed a few thieves when it came through Goma, and subsequently banditry stopped. There is no nostalgia for Mobutu, and his luxurious former residence (which now houses RCD offices) is known locally as the Museum of Shame.

Birth and Death of a Party

16. (C) Victor Ngezayo told econoff about his attempt to form a political party, the Congolese Patriotic Movement (MPC) (Ref C). He said he founded the party to create a voice for good governance and tolerance. He believes that the Congolese have no faith in democracy and expect nothing from government because they have been burdened for 40 years by a dysfunctional system. To launch the MPC, he held a nine-day workshop open to everyone, including RCD and Mai Mai, to discuss the nature of the current crisis and to look for ways to end the war. Ngezayo sent the declaration the workshop produced to the RCD. His cover letter was conciliatory, noting that the MPC shared the values and motivations that inspired the RCD's 1998 rebellion.

17. (C) Ngezayo said that the MPC's declaration, which was released on the same day the RCD restructured (Ref A), was seen as sabotage by party leaders. Bizima Karaha threatened Ngezayo and others with hanging. Ngezayo said that Karaha told him: "This is our territory. Go conquer your own." Ngezayo told econoff he didn't want to get anyone killed, so he suspended his party.

18. (C) Ngezayo gave econoff a copy of the report on his workshop prepared for the RCD's intelligence service. The memo's description of the workshop is remarkably similar to Ngezayo's. The memo says the ostensible purpose of the workshop was to analyze the current crisis, but the real goal was to start a political party "to install democracy and the rule of law in the Congo." The author of the memo, Director General of Internal Security Christian Bya-Mweze, warns that the MPC could lead some leaders astray and calls for a forceful RCD response.

Security Notes

19. (C) While life in Goma is relatively secure, there are constant reminders that the situation is dramatically different in the rest of North Kivu. The owner of a transportation company was interrupted during lunch by a phone call reporting delays due to the ambush of a truck just seven kilometers outside town on the road past the airport. A coffee buyer from Beni on a visit to Goma mentioned that a few nights earlier two people were killed in central Beni. He then commented that whenever a couple of UPDF are killed, the Ugandans burn villages and kill forty Congolese. The Vice President of the local Chamber of Commerce (FEC) mentioned in a similarly offhand manner that he had been forced to assume double duties when the local FEC President was killed in a road ambush.

110. (C) Residents of Goma describe a much more complicated security picture than is recognized in Kinshasa. When attacks occur by irregular combatants, the perpetrators could be members of any of a number of groups: Mai Mai, Mongol, Simba, FDD, SPLA, LRA, Ex-FAR, Interhamwe, deserters or bandits. Fixing blame is difficult. (It is notable that those in Goma view the ex-FAR and Interhamwe as two separate

groups, never linking them casually as is common in Kinshasa.) Asked about reports that the Rwandans have created a force of false Interhamwe (Ref D), residents of Goma have an open mind. They don't rule out the possibility that there is a Rwandan campaign to terrorize local residents, but note that these reports may simply refer to Rwandan expeditionary forces made up of recently released prisoners. Anything is possible. The great fear of Goma residents is that the Kivu provinces, once referred to as "Little Switzerland," will become a land made up of warlords' fiefdoms.

SWING